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FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8508  
INFO RUEHXR/RWANDA COLLECTIVE  
RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE  
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KINSHASA 000814

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [KPKO](#) [PHUM](#) [PREF](#) [CG](#)

SUBJECT: Goma Report September 29: At meeting with  
MONUC, CNDP says it will not withdraw further  
until FARDC honors cease-fire

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Facilitation members joined a MONUC-CNDP meeting near Bunagana September 29, in which CNDP refused to consider any further withdrawals from proposed zones of separation until FARDC ceases all military action and withdraws to pre-August 28 positions. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) On September 29, there was no exchange of fire or major move of forces in any sector in the Petit Nord. Even at Rugari, where FARDC amassed five tanks and other heavy weaponry along the Rutshuru highway, FARDC held its fire, at the direct urging of North Kivu brigade. (Note: On September 28, FARDC had pounded CNDP's positions in the heights above Rugari, and even briefly occupied Himbi Heights, from which CNDP had withdrawn. End note.) FARDC continues to occupy Tongo and apparently reoccupied Kabizo (north of Tongo) on September 28. North Kivu brigade operations chief gave his view September 29 to facilitation members that FARDC appears to be holding its ground better and moving with greater confidence now than in the past.

¶3. (SBU) CNDP's commander of the Bunagana (eastern) sector Col. Makenga on September 28 requested a meeting with North Kivu brigade and the international facilitation at Chengerero (MONUC base near Bunagana) on September 29. Deputy Commander Col. Negi led the delegation. In the event, Makenga did not appear. He was represented by Maj. Bagabo Castro and CNDP political officer Benjamin Bonimpa. They said that Makenga could not attend because he was preoccupied with the previous day's FARDC artillery barrages at Rugari and was not able to leave in time to join the meeting.

¶4. (SBU) Negi laid out MONUC's concept of a preferred zone of separation in the Rutshuru corridor. This plan, he said, would include a further withdrawal of CNDP in three areas, east of Rugari, east of Kanombe, and down the Bunagana road past Matebe. Negi emphasized that FARDC had now withdrawn from Mutabo back to its pre-August 28 position near Rutshuru and had withdrawn from Ntamugenga, although not yet as far west there as MONUC would like. He said MONUC would continue to press FARDC to withdraw from Kisherero and from an area south of Rugari. He said that a minimum three-kilometer separation was essential to ensure peace and, strategically, "one hill here or there should not be important to the CNDP."

¶5. (SBU) Castro said that CNDP had resumed all its pre-August 28 positions and was observing the ceasefire in every sector. It would not consider further withdrawals, to create bigger buffer zones, until FARDC observed the ceasefire in all sectors and similarly withdrew to pre-August 28 positions. He objected to MONUC's plan of a sequential withdrawal process, with the eastern zone of separation created first, then south, west, and north. He noted that FARDC, in partially withdrawing its force from Ntamugenga, had simply moved that force west to occupy Tongo, which was also CNDP territory. It was false, he said, to paint Rugari as a flashpoint, since FARDC had simply used Rugari as an excuse to begin a bombardment, without any

attack there from CNDP.

¶6. (SBU) MONUC was, Castro continued, pursuing a false neutrality which was lenient on FARDC but negative to CNDP, not stopping FARDC attacks but attacking CNDP when CNDP hit the FARDC. CNDP did not trust FARDC's withdrawal from Ntamugenga, which in fact CNDP had considered to be its area prior to August 28. (Note: North Kivu brigade now tells us that CNDP had continued to send patrols there, even while its permanent presence, as now, was in the heights overlooking Ntamugenga. End note.) Castro said that CNDP feared that Ntamugenga would soon become another Kimoka. (Note: CNDP allowed Kimoka to be occupied by MONUC as a neutral zone, but in FARDC's recent barrage, FARDC parked its artillery around Kimoka. CNDP sees this as MONUC complicity with FARDC, even though MONUC has repeatedly admonished FARDC to keep away from its bases while conducting operations. End note.)

¶7. (SBU) Bonimpa said that it was essential that CNDP and FARDC meet at a high level. Facilitation members noted that FARDC Kivus commander General Lukama had offered to meet CNDP at Kimoka, with no positive response from CNDP. Bonimpa dismissed Lukama as too low in stature and lacking in power. In fact, while insisting on a high-level bilateral meeting, Bonimpa could not produce a single FARDC or government interlocutor that would be satisfactory to the CNDP.

¶8. (SBU) Other issues raised by CNDP included what it considered targeted arrests of Tutsis in Rutshuru and Goma, FARDC collaboration with FDLR and PARECO, and FARDC's indiscriminate use of its multi-barreled rocket launchers that were causing high civilian casualties.

KINSHASA 00000814 002 OF 002

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